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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 070740Z MAR 77
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7332
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 0410

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ECON, CH
SUBJ: IMPRESSIONS FROM THE PROVINCES

1. USLO OFFICER VISITED SHANGHAI, SUCHOU (SEOCHOW) NANKING, LOYANG AND SIAN DURING FEBRUARY 22 - MARCH 5, FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR IMPRESSIONS FROM VISIT. DETAILS CONCERNING WALL-POSTERS WILL BE REPORTED BY SEPTEL AND REPORTS ON FACTORY VISITS BY AIRGRAM.

2. THE GANG OF FOUR. IN ALL PLACES THE ONGOING CAMPAIGN TO EXPOSE AND CRITICIZE THE "GANG OF FOUR" IS WHOLLY ORTHODOX AND OFFICIALLY SPONSORED; PROLIFERATING CARICATURES GRACE THE WALLS OF CENTRAL SPARES AND SHOPPING DISTRICTS WHILE IN SHANGHAI 360 OF THE "BEST" OF SUCH CREATIONS ARE DIS-PLAYED FOR THE MASSES IN A LOCAL ART GALLERY. THE GANG AND ITS CRIMES ARE THE CENTRAL--INDEED THE ONLY--THEME OF SONG-AND-DANCE PERFORMANCES BY SCHOOLCHILDREN. HERE AND THERE WALLPOSTERS ACCUSE LOCAL OFFICIALS OF
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SERVING AS "GANG OF FOUR" HENCHMEN, BLACK ACE GENERALS, REPRESENTATIVES AND SO FORTH; BUT NEARLY ALL ARE TATTERED, REMINDERS OF A CAMPAIGN WHICH APPARENTLY PEAKED DURING DECEMBER-JANUARY IN THE PROVINCES VISITED.

3. FACTORY OFFICIALS INVARIABLY INCLUDE A PASSAGE

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OR TWO IN THEIR CANNED BRIEFINGS CONCERNING DELE-
TERIOUS EFFECTS OF GANG OF FOUR MACHINATIONS. BUT
PRESSED FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES, THEY ALLUDE GRUDGINGLY
THAT STATE PLAN TARGETS WERE FULFILLED OR OVERFUL-
FILLED IN 1976, AND CONFESS THAT THE COMPOSITION OF
THE FACTORY LEADERSHIP IS UNCHANGED SINCE THE HEYDAY
OF THE GANG OF FOUR (JUST AS TENG HSIAO-PINT'S FALL
LAST YEAR WAS RARELY REFLECTED AT THE FACTORY LEVEL).

4. CHAIRMAN HUA. HUA KUO-FENG'S PICTURE IS ON THE
WALLS BESIDE MAO; HIS STOLID FEATURES ARE METICULOUSLY
HANDSTITCHED INTO THE LATEST SUCHOU EMBROIDERED
TAPESTRIES; AND HE IS REGULARLY HAILED, SOMETIMES
WITH ENTHUSIASM THOUGH MORE OFTEN WITH EVIDENT PER-
FUNCTORINESS, FOR SMASHING THE GANG OF FOUR. BUT HE
RATES A POOR FOURTH IN SPONTANEOUS MENTIONS--AS
OPPOSED TO SET-PIECE BRIEFINGS--BEHIND THE
REVOLUTIONARY PANTHEON OF MAO, CHOU, AND CHU.
(QUANTITATIVELY, "BELOVED AND RESPECTED" CHOU IS
CITED MOST OFTEN NOW BY A GOOD MARGIN, FOLLOWED BY
MAO, CHU, HUA, AND "THE LEADERSHIP.") MAO'S LEGITI-
MIZING BLESSING TO HUA--"WITH YOU IN CHARGE I'M AT
EASE"--IS THE THEME OF IDEALIZED PAINTINGS, TAPESTRIES
AND SCHOOLGIRL SKITS, BUT IT IS NEVER EVOKED IN
BRIEFINGS, JUST AS IT HAS LONG SINCE FADED FROM THE
DAILY MEDIA.

5. TENG HSIAO-PING. TENG REMAINS A NON-PERSON, AN
EMBARRASSMENT RECALLED ONLY IN ANCIENT POSTERS AND
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SLOGANS AMIDST MORE CURRENT AND ACCEPTABLE EXHORTA-
TIONS TO OPEN UP CRITICISM OF THE GANG, EMULATE
TACHAI AND TACHING, LEARN FROM LEI FENG, STUDY THE
TWO DOCUMENTS, AND "GRASP THEY KEY LINK AND BRING
ORDER TO THE COUNTRY." ALL CHINESE ARE CLEAR ON ONE
POINT: TENG HSIAO-PING COMMITTED ERRORS. THIS THEY
VOLUNTEER IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT TENG AND
THE ANACHRONISTIC POSTERS. BUT THEY ARE NOT PREPARED,
OWING TO LACK OF GUIDANCE (AND TO A WELL-HONED SENSE
OF POLITICAL SELF-PRESERVATION) TO GO FARTHER.
ONE SHANGHAI FACTORY OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TENG
"MADE ERRORS, ESPECIALLY TAKING THE THREE DIRECTIVES
INSTEAD OF CLASS STRUGGLE AS THE KEY LINK," BUT
EXPLAINED, WIHOUT APPARENT IRONY, THAT "THE NEW
MAJOR TASK IS CRITICISM OF THE GANG OF FOUR." A
SIAN FACTORY MANAGER, ASKEDABOUT TWO ANTI-TENG
POSTERS STILL VISIBLY DISPLAYED IN ONE WORKSHOP,
EXPLAIND THAT TENG HAD, AFTER ALL, COMMITTED
ERRORS. BUT HIS VIGILANT SUBORDINATES, HAVING TAKEN

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IN THE CONVERSATION AND ASSMING THAT THE FOREIGN
GUESTS WERE OUT OF EARSHOT, DRESSED DOWN THE WORKERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR LEAVING THE OFFENDING POSTERS UP AND
ORDERED THEM REMOVED IMMEDIATELY.

6. CHINESE LIFE. IF THE STYLE AND TONE OF CHINESE
LIFE HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE FALL OF THE GANG OF FOUR,
THIS IS NOT READILY DISCERNIBLE. "NEW" MOVIES--
PRODUCED PRE-1965 AND SUBSEQUENTLY SUPPRESSED BY THE
GANG OF FOUR OWING, EVIDENTLY, TO INSUFFICIENT
ADULATION FOR MAO OR FAILURE TO THUMP HOME AN IDEO-
LOGICAL POINT--PLAY EVERYWHERE TO LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC
AUDIENCES. BUT THESE "HUNDRED FLOWERS" ARE
WITHERED AT BEST. HUA'S FIVE-MONTH-OLD REGIME HAS
NOT YET BROUGHT FORTH ANYTHING GENUINELY NEW IN
CULTURE, ONLY A RESTORATION OF RESPECTABILITY AND
OFFICIAL SANCTION TO THE OLD. USLO OFFICER WAS
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INVITED TO VIEW TWO SUCH PRE-CULTURAL REVOLUTION
EPICS WHICH ARE ALSO BEING SHOWN REGULARLY IN PEKING:

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 CU-02 OMB-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 /078 W
----------070854Z 052845 /13
R 070740Z MAR 77
FM USLO PEKING
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PEKING 0410

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"CHIA-WU FENG-YUN" (STORN IN 1894) AND "P'ING-YUAN YU-CHI-TUI" (GUERRILLA SQUAD ON THE PLAIN). THE FORMER, A WELL-ACTED PERIOD PIECE FILMED IN THE EARLY 1960S, DEALS WITH THE ONSET OF THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR AND FEATURES A CENTRAL CHARACTER SUR-NAMED TENG WHO IS REMOVED FROM HIS POSITION FOR UNPOLITIC BRASHNESS BUT SUBSEQUENTLY REHABILITATED AND REINSTATED TO WAGE A HEROIC IF LOSING SEA BATTLE AGAINST THE JAPANESE. THE LATTER FILM, PRODUCED IN 1955 IN SYENYANG, DEALS HUMOROUSLY AND NONPOLEMICALLY WITH THE HEROIC EXPLOITS OF VILLAGE GUERRILLA LEADER LI HSIANG-YANG IN THE ANTI-JAPANESE RESISTANCE WAR; LI AND HIS COMRADES EMERGE VICTORIOUS OVER THE RATHER BUMBLING JAPANESE WITHOUT ONCE EVOKING THE NAME OF MAO, MARX, OR COMMUNISM.

7. BUT WHILE THE CHINESE MASSES ARE ONCE AGAIN AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO APPLAUD LESS STEREOTYPED NATIONAL AND CULTURAL HEROES, THE CADRE LEVEL HAS CONFIDENTIAL

NOT ALTERED ITS ACCUSTOMED MODE OF DEALING WITH FOREIGN TRAVELERS. THERE IS NO MORE OPENNESS, NO MORE CANDOR, NO MORE FLEXIBILITY, AND NO MORE SPONTANEITY. ASKED BY USLO OFFICER TO EXPLAIN THE CHARGE THAT CHIANG CHING HAD ILLICIT CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES--A STANDARD LINE IN SCHOOLCHILD SKITS--THE CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE GUIDE ALLUDED TO THE WITKE INTERVIEW AND VIEWING OF "PORNOGRAPHIC" FILMS FROM ABROAD. PRESSED FOR DETAILS, THE GUIDE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SHE DID NOT KNOW WHAT "STATE SECRETS" HAD BEEN REVEALED OR WHY THE FILMS WERE CONSIDERED "PORNOGRAPHIC" BUT ENDED THE DISCUSSION BY AFFAIRMING "I BELIEVE IN SOCIALISM." A DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE TRAVELING CONCURRENTLY IN CHANGSHA ASKED HIS GUIDE HOW LONG HE HAD WORKED FOR CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE. THE CURT REJOINDER: "MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN INTERPRETER DO NOT OBLIGE ME TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION." FACTORY BRIEFINGS PRE AND POST-GANG OF FOUR CONTAIN ONLY ONE NOTEWORTHY DIFFERENCE--ASSUMP-TION BY THE GANG OF FOUR OF THE BETE NOIRE ROLE PREVIOUSLY PLAYED BY TENG. THE SAME SUSPICION AND UNCOMMUNICATIVENESS GREETS ROUTINE INQUIRIES ABOUT FACTORY WAGES, SAFETY STANDARDS, PRODUCTION GOALS, AND SO ON. AND THE RAIL TRAVELER IS, AS ALWAYS, CONSCIOUSLY INSULATED AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANCE ENCOUNTER OR CONVERSATION WITH ORDINARY CHINESE.

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8. GREAT ORDER AND THE PLA. THE PLA ARE UBIQUITOUS, IN COMMAND, AND PRIVILEGED. RECENT PRESS OBSERVATIONS THAT THE RAILWAYS HAVE A "SEMI-MILITARY CHARACTER" ARE NOTABLE UNDERSTATEMENTS. RAILWAY TERMINALS DISPLAY SOLGANS SUPPORTING MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAY ORDER AND SECURITY AND WELCOMING THE "RETURN HOME" OF PLA SOLDIERS. EVERY SPARTAN PASSENGER CAR IS BULDING WITH PLA ENLISTED MEN; EVERY SLEEPING
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BERTH CAR IS RESERVED FOR FOREIGNERS AND PLA OFFICERS; EVERYWHERE ONE SEES UNIFORMED PLA SOLDIERS SPORTING BADGES IDENTIFYING THEM AS "RAILWAY WORKERS"; AT EACH MAJOR RAIL JUNCTION ONE OBSERVES THE PLA SHARING STATION GURAD DUTIES WITH PUBLIC SECURITY PERSONNEL AND CIVILIAN RAIL WORKERS.

9. FOCUS ON THE ECONOMY. TRAVEL THROUGH THE PROVVINCES DRIVES HOPE THE POINT THAT THE NATIONAL FOCUS IS CURRENTLY ON ECONOMICS, ONLY SECONDARILY ON POLITICS. BRIEFERS REVILE THE GANG OF FOUR FOR EQUATING HIGHER PRODUCTION WITH REVISIONISM. SOME SHANGHAI WORKERS HAVE WON FAVORABLE WAGE ADJUSTMENTS SINCE THE PURGE OF THE GANG. THE PROVINCES ARE ATTENTIVE TO THE TACHAI EXPERIENCE AND ARE GEARING UP FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING FROM TACHING IN INDUSTRY; A SUCHOU CONFERENCE ON LEARNING FROM TACHAI WAS HELD BEGINNING FEBRUARY 25, A NANKING MUNICIPAL MEETING ON LEARNING FROM TACHING OPENED ON FEBRUARY 27, AND A LOYANG MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE ON TACHING CONVENED ON MARCH 1. MEANWHILE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ARE PROFESSING DETERMINATION TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, APPARENTLY WIDESPREAD. A SUCHOU MUNICIPAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE DIRECTIVE, DATED IN LATE DECEMBER BUT STILL POSTED THROUGHOUT THE CITY, ANNOUNCED TIGHTENING OF "CONTROLS ON MARKETS, SPECULATION, AND FREE MAGWTQ ACTIVITIES." IN SIAN, MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICE DIRECTIVE NUMBER ONE OF 1977 (DATED JANUARY 15) IS CAPTIONED "STRICT PROHIBITION OF ILLEGAL TRANSACTIONS IN BICYCLES." BUT THE FREE MARKET IS MANIFESTLY THRIVING; ON THE ROAD FROM LOYANG TO LUNG-MEN CAVES PEASANTS HAWK THEIR CHICKENS AND PRODUCE; PAPER LANTERS FOR THE COMING LANTERN FESTIVAL ARE SOLD ALONG THE STREETS OF LOYAND AND SIAN; AND ROADSIDE TEA STANDS (AT .01RMB
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PER CUP) ARE ERECTED THROUGHOUT SIAN.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Review Release Event: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: IMPRESSIONS FROM THE PROVINCES
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